



From the Office of Congresswoman Mazie K. Hirono



HEALTH REFORM AT A GLANCE: MEETING HEALTH CARE NEEDS OF SENIOR CITIZENS & PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Medicare has been a stable, reliable program for senior citizens, people with disabilities and those with End Stage Renal Disease for over four decades and provides coverage for over 45 million individuals each year. Health reform is needed to rein in rising health costs for private and public programs alike. Improving and strengthening Medicare is a critical component of reform.

The House Democratic bill will improve Medicare beneficiaries' access to quality, affordable health care.

MEDICARE PROVISIONS IN THE BILL:

- **Fills the Part D Drug Program Donut Hole:** Closing the Medicare donut hole is an especially critical issue for Hawaii as we are home to the nation's largest percentage -- 36 percent compared with 26 percent nationwide -- of Medicare beneficiaries who fall into this gap of prescription drug coverage. H.R. 3200 would provide a 50 percent discount on brand-name prescription drugs for Hawaii's 33,000 seniors who fall into the donut hole, with the goal of eliminating the gap entirely over time.
- **Enhances Preventive Coverage:** Eliminates copayments for preventive services in Medicare.
- **Helps Low-Income Seniors:** Improves low-income subsidy programs to help ensure Medicare is affordable for those with low and modest incomes.
- **Combats Waste, Fraud & Abuse:** Ensures the program operates in the best interests of its beneficiaries -- and all taxpayers -- by expanding authority to fight waste, fraud and abuse.
- **Ends Medicare Advantage Overpayments:** Ends overpayments to private health plans in Medicare, called Medicare Advantage plans, and adds additional consumer protections to ensure that these plans are investing premiums in patient care and do not charge higher cost-sharing than traditional Medicare.
- **Protecting the Doctor-Patient Relationship and Improving Quality:** Resolves a long-standing problem with the physician payment formula in a way that promotes primary care and advances innovation. Investments in health delivery system reform will improve coordinated care, promote efficiency, and enhance quality.
- **Extends the Medicare Trust Fund:** Following the advice of experts at the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, the proposal makes numerous changes in provider payments that enhance the solvency of Medicare and put it on stronger financial footing for the future.

Prepared by the House Committees on Education and Labor, Ways and Means, and Energy and Commerce.